WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK

LOCATION

Waterton Lakes National Park is an outstanding mountains area rising abruptly from the prairie in the southwest corner of Alberta. Set apart as a National Park in 1895, it extends over 203 square miles along the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. It flows immediately north of the International Boundary, Glacier National Park, Montana, joins it to the south. The two parks together forming Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park (The creation of this Peace Park in 1932 was the first of its kind in the world.)

The detailed map in this folder has been prepared especially to assist visitors to identify readily the various features of the Park.

PURPOSE

Waterton Lakes National Park is one of Canada's finest National Parks, which forms a chain of nature sanctuaries extending from Mount Revelstoke, British Columbia to Terra Nova in Newfoundland. These Parks have been established for the preservation of selected areas in their natural state for the benefit, education and enjoyment of present and future generations of Canadians.

This vast area of more than 29,000 square miles is administered by the National and Historic Parks Branch, Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources.

NATURAL FEATURES

GEOLOGICAL

The mountains within the Park are carved out of a series of layered sediments over a mile thick. They include some of the oldest rocks known in the Rocky Mountains of Canada. Some of these rocks show structures which are believed to be fossilized and the old sediments were uplifted and displaced horizontally during late geological time and now lie adjacent to much younger sediments in the north-eastern section of the Park, which have yielded fossil shells. The uplifted mountains have been progressively dissected by eroding streams and further modified by alpine glaciation. The results are the sharp peaks, narrow ridges and interlocked U-shaped valleys. The highest peak is Mount Blakiston with an altitude of 8,960 feet.

The distinctive purple, green and grey coloring of the various geological formations throughout the park has been caused by chemical change in the minute mineral particles making up formations. This chemical change was brought about by changes in climate while the particles were moved to other areas by the waters which eroded their original location.

Waterton Lakes is noteworthy for its glacial scarring which is well illustrated by the prominent cirques, rock-basin lakes or tarns, U-shaped valleys, hanging valleys and waterfalls. One of the most conspicuous features of the Park area is the main chain of lakes. The largest lake, Upper Waterton, is seven miles long and one-half mile wide. In places it is over 450 feet deep. This lake, which spans the International Boundary, separates the Lewis and Clark Ranges and occupies part of a valley that has been considerably deepened and widened by valley glaciers. A hanging valley developed in the deepening caused Cameron Falls in the townsite area.

Notches formed in the rock by frost and snow water are much in evidence coming down the side of Vimy Peak. The light green bare straights down the mountain above the townsite from Bertha Peak and elsewhere by snow slides which swept the forest from their pathway leaving only low shrubs and grasses.

A great overthrust which affected the mountains on this eastern slope of the Continental Divide is also characteristic of this area. The course of folding was so great that some of the oldest rocks in this region now overlie younger rocks and thus form a few 'upside down' mountains such as Vimy Ridge, Crandell Mountain and other mountains in the Waterton-Lakes National Park along the eastern edge of the Park.

The townsite is built on a delta deposited from the viewpoint at the top of the Bears Hump Trail.

Where the mountains rise from the prairies.

BLUFFS of Waterton Park are: rocky, short-tailed weasel, lynx, weaverine, skunk, bunter, bebeat, pika, snowshoe hare, hoary marmot, columnar ground squirrel, gilded mantled ground squirrel, red squirrel, pocket gopher, beaver, and muskrat.

The larger mammals characteristic of the Park are: black bear, grizzly bear, cougar, elk, mule deer, moose, bighorn sheep and mountain goat.

A small herd of plains bison is maintained in a paddock near the main gate to the Park. This species roamed the foothills and mountain valleys years ago. While domesticated deer are occasionally seen in the park.

Some of the smaller mammals characteristic of Waterton Park are: coyote, marten, short-tailed weasel, lynx, weaverine, skunk, bunter, bebeat, pika, snowshoe hare, hoary marmot, columnar ground squirrel, gilded mantled ground squirrel, red squirrel, pocket gopher, beaver, and muskrat.

Waterton Park has a rich and varied bird life. In the spring and autumn for numbers of migrating ducks, geese and swans rest in the lakes. Many ducks remain in the Park throughout the summer to nest. The contrasting marked harlequin duck is occasionally seen in mountain rivers and streams where it3 substitutes with the rapid with ease.

Golden eagles are frequently seen soaring and gliding above the mountain slopes. Several species of hawks occur at the lower elevations. Blue grouse occur in the grassy or alpine vegetation of the mountain slopes, Broods of whitetailed ptarmigan are sometimes encountered on the alpine meadows around the high elevation lakes.

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WATERTON - GLACIER INTERNATIONAL PEACE PARK

Canadian Section

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The dipper or water ouzel, a fascinating little brown bird smaller than a robin, is found year round along swift mountain streams where it swims and washes beneath the water to feed on animal matter.

FISH
Modern methods of fish management are followed to improve angling in the lakes and streams of the Park and a regular stocking program is carried out. Rainbow, cutthroat, lake and eastern brook trout may be taken.

HOW TO SEE THE INTERESTING FEATURES
While the roads in the Park lead to some of the interesting features the best way to gain a full appreciation of the sights is to walk the trails. A large number of people derive considerable satisfaction from rambling or riding along the more than 50 miles of open trail. Many areas of exceptional natural interest and a day’s travel along the trails to the high lakes and alpine meadows. At most of the high lakes a shelter, a modern campground, at the south end of the townsite, is completely equipped with kitchen, laundry and washroom facilities with showers. A modern

Most of the trails radiate from the townsite. The most popular of the routes, with the average walking time one way, are, Bertha Lake, 2 1/2 hours, Alderson and Carthew Lakes, 2 1/2 hours, International Boundary, 2 1/2 hours, Goat Haunt. Camp at the head of the lake (Glacier Park), 3 1/2 hours, Cranwell Lake, 2 1/2 hours, Viny Mountain, 3 hours, Crypt Lake (from Heli Riding, 2 1/2 hours.

Another series of trails leads from Red Rock Canyon to Goat Lake, Lott Lake, Twin Lakes, and the South Kooteckli Pass.

All the trails lead through alpine valleys and best reveal the grandeur of mountain terrains. The brilliant colouring of wildflowers can be enjoyed from close at hand. The trails usually wind along the side of the mountains past waterfalls to lakes. The mountain lakes have water of vivid emerald shades which combine in pleasing contrast with dark green forest and the multicoloured slopes of the surrounding peaks to form a striking picture. A trip to the high country will reward the visitor with an unequalled view of the tops of the rugged peaks of the Rocky Mountains stretching for miles in all directions, broken only by the white silhouettes of the glaciers and icefields, or by drifting clouds.

GENERAL INFORMATION

PARK ADMINISTRATION

A resident Superintendant is in charge of the Park. The protection of the park and the visitor is in the hands of the Warden Service assisted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Visitors may obtain detailed information from the nearest Park Information Centre.

Fishing licences, seasons, and catch limits are available from the nearest Park Information Centre. Reservations are not made by National Park staff.

ACCOMMODATION

Details of accommodation are available at the Park Information Centre. Reservations are not made by National Park staff.

CREATION

The Park is open throughout the year, but it is only from May to September that all the facilities are provided in the Park. During the winter months a motel, a grocer and washroom facilities are available at most of the high lakes. Some of this equipment can still be seen.

Most visitors travel to Waterton Lakes National Park by car. Alberta Highways 9 and 1 enter the Park from the north and east and Montana route 17 enters from the south. Buses run daily from Calgary and Lethbridge to Waterton Lakes National Park. A small airport is served by Trans-Canada Airlines. A small landing field is located near Pincher Creek.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PARK

Waterton Lakes National Park derives its name from the lakes which form the headwaters of the Rocky Mountains. These lakes were named in honour of Charles Waterton, famed 18th century English naturalist, and his cousin, Thomas Blakiston who led a party of the Palliser Expedition 1857—1860. Mount Blakiston perpetuates the name of this officer.

The expedition marked a turning point in the history of the region which blighted had been preserved in a region unknown to the plucky band of the hostile Blackfoot Indian Federation. In 1886 traces of oil were discovered in Lethbridge and Alberta's first oil well was drilled there in 1902. Some of this equipment can still be seen.

MOTOR-BOATS

Boating is a popular pastime in the Park. Motor-boats are permitted only on the main Waterton Lakes and Maskinonge Lake. Boat docking and launching facilities are available at the townsite docks and nearby on the Middle Waterton Lake near Lake Linnet.

Hiking is a restricted boating area. All motor-boat safety measures are restricted to a maximum speed of 5 miles per hour. All boats operating on the lakes must carry a number plate which conforms with federal navigation regulations.

HOW TO REACH THE PARK

Most visitors travel to Waterton Lakes National Park by car. Alberta Highways 9 and 1 lead into the Park from the north and east and Montana route 17 enters from the south. Buses run daily from Calgary and Lethbridge to the Park site. Visitors observing an unattended fire should report it to the nearest Park employee. Fire in a park. For the protection of all park animals, however, dogs must be kept on leash.

PARK Warden

Visitors entering the Park by car are required to register and obtain a Park motor licence at the entrance. A licence good in all the National Parks in Canada is available.

PREVENT FIRE

Campsites may be kindled only in fireplaces provided for this purpose and must be completely extinguished before campers leave the site.

Visitors observing an unattended fire should attempt to extinguish it if possible and promptly report it to the nearest Park employee. Fire in a Park can cause damage which cannot be repaired in a hundred years.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBING

Parks Regulations require that all persons before climbing a mountain shall register with the District Park Warden indicating their proposed route and time of departure. Experienced climbers should obtain the services of a guide and full information concerning the necessary equipment. They must also report in to the Warden Service on returning.

PETS

Dogs and cats may accompany a visitor into the Park. The protection of all park animals, however, dogs must be kept on leash.

MOTOR LICENCE

Visitors entering the Park by car are required to register and obtain a Park motor licence at the entrance. A licence good in all the National Parks in Canada is available.
from the Akamina Highway some 5 miles from the townsite.

The gradual settlement of the region ultimately led to the filing of a petition to make this area a National Park. Most active in the promotion of this objective was John George "Kootenai" Brown, who was later to become the first Park Warden and subsequently the Acting Park Superintendent. Kootenai Brown lies buried between his two wives in a specially marked grave near the Lower Lake (Knight's Lake).

The idea to link Waterton Lakes National Park with Glacier National Park in Montana originated at the first goodwill meeting of the Rotary Clubs of Alberta and Montana in 1931. By their efforts laws were passed the following year by Canada and the United States of America to link the two parks into the first International Peace Park in the world. The Association formed by the original Rotarians meets annually on alternate sides of the border to renew their pledge of friendship and foster goodwill throughout the world.

Although the Park has been set apart primarily to preserve its natural features for the enjoyment of the future generations, the Parks Service has also provided other recreation facilities. In addition to those already mentioned, there are: an 18-hole golf course, tennis courts, modern swimming pool and a children's playground.

Waterton Park Townsite contains all the customary services of a modern community, with hotels, motels and restaurants located throughout the business area. A motion picture theatre and dance pavilion operate during the summer.

Persons wishing additional information concerning the Park may address their inquiries to:

The Superintendent,
Waterton Lakes National Park,
Waterton Park, Alberta,

or

National and Historic Parks Branch,
Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources,
Ottawa, Canada.